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Operation Holiday Wish List In High Gear

Multi-Department Strike Force Hits The Streets For New Years Holiday

(SACRAMENTO) -- At the direction of Business, Transportation and Housing secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, five traffic safety departments are pooling resources this holiday season to save lives on California highways. Beginning December 16, 2004, the California Highway Patrol, the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, the Office of Traffic Safety, Caltrans, and the Department of Motor Vehicles dedicated extra resources to Operation Holiday Wish List.

The joint effort paid off over the Christmas weekend. Traffic fatalities in California dropped by 24% from a comparable period in 1999, the most recent previous two-day Christmas holiday reporting period. In 1999, 34 people died on California highways. This year the total was 26.

"While even one life lost is too many, we are encouraged by this improvement and we hope to do even better over New Year's weekend," said CHP commissioner Mike Brown. "But, I also note that 76% of the fatal victims were not wearing their seat belts. That must change," said Brown. Operation Wish List will continue through midnight January 2, 2005. It's hoped the extra publicity generated by the strike force will result in people changing their driving behavior for the better.

Eighty percent of the CHP's officers will be on the road this holiday, including supervisors normally assigned to headquarters administrative jobs. ABC will have every available sworn officer in the field checking to see if minors or intoxicated adults are being served by liquor establishments. The O.T.S. is coordinating efforts with local law enforcement agencies. Caltrans is putting traffic safety reminders on its changeable message signs along roadways. DMV offices have traffic safety information posted in its field offices as added reminders.

We'd like all Californians to commit to three New Year's resolutions: 1) Don't Drink and Drive, 2) Obey Speed Laws, and 3) Wear Your Seatbelt. Statistics in all three categories have been going in the wrong direction the past few years. This combined BTH effort is to reverse those



trends, making California a safer place to work, live and play.

